

# **Appropriation Subcommittee on Education**

## **Report on Special Schools and Commissions, the Department of Education and Higher Education**

**Chairman - Lambert**

**Members - P. Smith, Peterson, Pearson, Harrison**

The Appropriation Education Subcommittee met eight times, a total of over fifteen hours, to discuss PreK-Higher Education fiscal issues. These meetings were well attended by committee members. Additional House members attended several committee meetings. All meetings started with a presentation by House Fiscal Division staff. Presentations explained significant changes between existing operating budgets and FY 08-09 Executive Budget Recommendations and highlighted significant issues in each agency's budget. At the conclusion of each House Fiscal Division presentation, the State Superintendent of Education, the Commissioner of Higher Education and other agency directors were provided an opportunity to acquaint the subcommittee members with insight as to the primary mission and goals of their departments and agencies for the upcoming year. Ample time remained for members to ask questions of the department heads.

### **SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Special Schools and Commissions and the Department of Education are two separate sections within HB 1 and were discussed in five of the eight meetings:

March 5, 2008 - an overview of K-12 Education in Louisiana

March 12, 2008 - the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE)

March 20, 2008 - the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)

March 26, 2008 - the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI), the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) and the Louisiana Special Education Center (LSEC)

April 1, 2008 - the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts (LSMSA), the Louisiana Educational Television Authority (LETA) and the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA)

Higher Education includes six separate appropriations within HB 1 and was discussed in six of the eight meetings:

February 19, 2008 - an overview of higher education in Louisiana

March 20, 2008 - Board of Regents and Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)

March 26, 2008 - the Louisiana State University System (LSU)

April 1, 2008 - the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)

April 8, 2008 - the Southern University System

April 15, 2008 - the University of Louisiana System (ULS)

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### **K-12 REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES**

**March 5, 2008 meeting (K-12 Overview)** - House Fiscal Division budget analyst George Silbernagel presented a powerpoint presentation comparing state, federal and local sources of funding on a per pupil basis which illustrated that Louisiana state funding for K-12 education was slightly above the southern average, while local funding on a per pupil basis was below the southern average. In addition, the percentage of current expenditures on instruction in Louisiana was slightly less than the southern average. The dramatic improvement in Louisiana average teacher salaries were also examined. In FY 95-96, Louisiana average teacher salary was only 86% of the SREB average teacher salary. By FY 07-08, the Louisiana average teacher salary is projected to be at the southern average.

Also discussed during the overview were the executive budget recommendations for the LDOE and the state agencies in Special Schools and Commissions. The last component of the presentation was a review of the importance of career and technical education both in providing a workforce for economic development purposes as well as a strategy to be used in reducing the number of high school dropouts by providing students that are not college-bound with trade and industrial education courses that can encourage them to remain in school and also prepare them for entering the workforce upon graduation.

Rep. Harrison brought up the wide variation in local ability to generate sales and property revenues owing to the different economic conditions for the state's school districts. Rep. Patricia Smith asked for additional information regarding the GO Grant and the Dual Enrollment initiatives.

### **DEPARTMENT HEARINGS**

**March 12, 2008 meeting (LDOE and SBESE)** - George Silbernagel discussed the various means of finance for SBESE and the LDOE and explained why actual expenditures are almost always less than budgeted expenditures as a result of agencies having excess budget authority which is deleted at the end of the fiscal year. The new initiatives contained in HB 1 were also delineated, including the \$80 million growth in the MFP and the \$55 million for certificated pay increase, as were the reductions for various activities, such as stipends for school social workers which were funded for the first time in FY 07-08. The MFP was briefly discussed in association with the new funding for the normal growth as well as for the certificated pay increase.

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State Superintendent Paul Pastorek outlined a number of issues and his vision for improving public elementary and secondary education in Louisiana. Superintendent Pastorek also discussed the progress made in the Recovery School District (RSD) school openings and the frustration of working with FEMA for approval of funding for eventual school constructions. RSD academic challenges are great where eighty-five percent of children are two or more years behind grade level. Rep. Patricia Smith questioned the Superintendent about the RSD enrollment and funding levels.

Chairman Lambert inquired about the use of the federal hurricane assistance by school districts. Rep. Peterson asked about the discontinuation of several programs – the sixth grade laptop pilot program and stipends for social workers as well as the lack of an authorized position count for the RSD, although there are approximately 1,900 persons employed by the RSD. Rep. Peterson asked RSD Superintendent Paul Vallas about the \$10 million earmarked for scholarships in the New Orleans area.

Rep. Harrison discussed with Superintendent Pastorek the special problems involving inclusion policies in special and regular education. Rep. Trahan asked the superintendent about the very popular LA4 Program for four-year old children and asked if additional funds were needed there. Rep. Pearson asked if the department was looking at a problem that needed to be addressed – that of teachers leaving the profession. The discussion turned to the need for greater communications between SBESE and the LDOE on funding, and High-School Redesign. There was considerable discussion between committee members and SBESE members regarding the compensation components of the Superintendent's contract.

**March 20, 2008 meeting (OSFA)** - George Silbernagel presented funding recommendations for the Office of Student Financial Assistance and noted the increase in State General Fund was due principally to the second year funding for the GO Grant. OSFA is also the administrating agency responsible for the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) and the Dual Enrollment programs. The number of TOPS awards since 1998 and the dollar amount, 380,000 and \$988 million, respectively, were included in the information as well as the most recent participation in the GO Grant and the Dual Enrollment programs. GO Grant participation was 14,838 with an estimated cost of \$13.7 million and the Dual Enrollment program had a nonduplicated student count of 5,820 students benefitting from \$2.7 million in awards.

Mr. Harrison requested information pertaining to the success rate for the newly-created GO Grant and the allocation of Go Grant funds by institution. Ms. Melanie Amrhein was introduced as the Executive Director of OSFA and addressed the post-Katrina condition of the agency after undergoing budget cuts, reduced work week and a voluntary layoff. Several members were concerned about

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participation and failure rates for TOPS and asked if there were actions that could lead to less attrition and more students becoming eligible for TOPS. Rep. Patricia Smith inquired how TOPS information could be made more available. Chairman Lambert asked about the eligibility rules for TOPS, GO Grant and PELL Grants.

**March 26, 2008 meeting (LSVI)** - George Silbernagel presented the budget history and executive budget recommendations for the three special schools under the administration of the SBESE. The Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired and the Louisiana School for the Deaf, both located in Baton Rouge, and the Louisiana Special Education Center, located in Alexandria, are separate budget units in the Special Schools and Commissions section of HB1 and are under the jurisdiction of the SBESE.

LSVI is a residential school located in Baton Rouge for students that are visually impaired and have other exceptionalities as well. LSVI is expected to serve 100 students on campus and 500 students off-campus in FY 08-09. Ms. Janet Ford is the Director of LSVI and was asked by Chairman Lambert about the status of LSVI becoming eligible for Title XIX funding. Ms. Ford stated that the efforts to make capital improvements had not kept pace after the storms but was hopeful that the new administration would make this a priority. Chairman Lambert and Rep. Harrison were both interested in the amount of state funds that could be saved if LSVI were to become Title XIX eligible. Ms. Ford stated that she thought that approximately sixty percent of LSVI's expenditures could be reimbursed with Title XIX Federal Funds. The Chairman and Rep Harrison commented that the state needed to be more involved in generating these Federal Funds and wanted time-lines established so that this opportunity would not go unused.

During her comments, Ms. Ford demonstrated what a braille writer was and explained that this is a pencil for the visually impaired students and the need for braille books. Ms. Ford also commented on the cost of fuel with respect to LSVI's budget. Rep. Peterson inquired about the effect of fuel increases on state agencies and if there could be some assistance provided state agencies that were being heavily impacted from those increases.

**March 26, 2008 meeting (LSD)** - LSD is a residential school located in Baton Rouge for students that are deaf and hearing impaired. LSD is expected to serve 222 students on campus and 265 students off-campus in FY 08-09. Mr. Kenneth David is the Director of LSD.

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Chairman Lambert and Rep. Pearson noted the difference in cost per student at LSD compared to LSVI. Mr. David explained that the campus is larger and that much of the costs are associated with the personnel needed at LSD for instruction, residency and the physical needs of the school. Rep. Harrison asked if the school was seeking all the Federal Funds that could be made available and wanted clarification on the possible eligibility of LSD for Title XIX reimbursements. Chairman Lambert inquired about fuel costs and their impact on the athletic program at the school. Chairman Trahan noted that money spent on athletics was money well spent. Rep. Patricia Smith asked LSD to address duplication with school districts and if LSD ever considered renting out buildings on the LSD campus. Mr. David stated that many school districts have difficulty finding teachers and that renting out space may be an option for the school to consider.

**March 26, 2008 meeting (LSEC)** - LSEC is a residential school located in Alexandria and serves developmentally delayed, mentally disabled and severely orthopedically challenged residential students ages 3 through 30 years. LSEC is expected to serve 92 students on campus in FY 08-09. Mr. Michael Joiner is the Director of LSEC and, when asked if the school was serving all the children needing services, said that there may be other children needing services who are sick and medically fragile. To admit additional children, staff noted that LSEC would have to be recognized for additional Title XIX beds in order to be reimbursed for additional expenses.

Staff noted that LSEC is a Title XIX licensed Intermediate Care Facility for the Handicapped (ICF-H) and receives most of its operating funds from Title XIX Federal Funds from the Department of Health and Hospitals. Rep. Harrison stated that special education students should be provided all the assistance they need and asked all three groups to help in this endeavor.

**April 1, 2008 meeting (LSMSA)** - Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts is a residential school located in Natchitoches with competitive admissions for high ability juniors and seniors. LSMSA also houses the Louisiana Virtual School, providing online, web-based instruction. LSMSA is expected to serve 350 students on campus in FY 08-09. Dr. Patrick Widhalm is the Director of LSMSA.

Rep. Harrison commented that LSMSA needs to have school counselors promote the school so that parents and students have all the facts. Approximately fifty percent of LSMSA graduates reside in the state. Rep. Harrison questioned why we can't keep the LSMSA graduates in-state and attending in-state colleges and universities. Dr. Widhalm indicated that prestigious universities such as MIT recruit at LSMSA and that it is difficult to increase retention of graduates in-state when universities such as MIT recruit them. Chairman Lambert asked if the enrollment trends of declining students would be reversed. LSMSA's enrollment decreased after the storms but the school is projecting a

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larger junior class in FY 08-09. Rep. Patricia Smith asked about the demographics of the LSMSA students and staff and how the school compared to its counterparts in other states. Dr. Widhalm explained the recruitment policy and what the school plans to do to improve recruitment and the school's early success at recruitment of sophomores for the first time. Rep. Nowlin, though not a member of the subcommittee, was recognized and said that, being from Natchitoches, he was very familiar with LSMSA and that it was an exemplary school.

The discussion also included the role of the Louisiana Virtual School housed on the LSMSA campus. Rep. Harrison asked for information concerning the number of schools and school districts participating in the LVS.

**April 1, 2008 meeting (LETA)** - Louisiana Educational Television Authority and Louisiana Public Broadcasting promote educational and public television in Louisiana by providing facilities and equipment at six analog and digital transmitter sites as well as a main studio in Baton Rouge. Ms. Beth Courtney is the Director of LETA. After George Silbernagel's budget overview, Ms. Courtney explained the conversion that all broadcast stations are required to complete by February 18, 2009 – namely the conversion from analog transmissions to digital transmissions and the availability of a \$40 coupon for add-on equipment to receive the digital signals if needed.

**April 1, 2008 meeting (NOCCA)** - New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts became an agency of the state in 2000 by act of the legislature. NOCCA provides professional arts training, coaching and performance opportunities for high school level students who aspire to be artists, performers and arts technicians and is projected to serve approximately 450 regular students in FY 08-09 and an additional 280 students in the summer program. Mr. Gary Wood is the Director of NOCCA. Rep. Harrison inquired how NOCCA measured if the school was accomplishing its mission. Mr. Wood said that one way NOCCA measures if it is accomplishing its mission is by demonstrating that ninety-eight percent of its seniors are accepted into college or gain entry into a related professional field and that the seniors receive a considerable amount of scholarship funding.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION HEARINGS**

**February 19, 2008 meeting (Overview)** - House Fiscal Division budget analyst Lois Azzarello presented a powerpoint presentation to introduce members to higher education in Louisiana. Members were provided general information on the Board of Regents, on the four management boards and on the many postsecondary schools across the state. A budget overview included a history

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of funding, current funding, significant changes between FY 07-08 and the FY 08-09 Executive Budget. In addition, members were given detailed information on what agencies had requested for FY 08-09.

Current issues related to Master Plan revisions and fiscal implications, student enrollment shifts, formula funding and performance were discussed. Members were advised how Louisiana compares to SREB peers on key indicators, such as faculty salary, graduation rates and tuition and fees.

Mr. Trahan stressed that performance is a concern and that it is time for higher education to be held more accountable, in terms of expecting more completers, given the state's investment and the fact that all schools are now funded at 100% formula funding level. Ms. Peterson asked for individual school revenues by means of finance. Mr. Harrison asked for detailed information on how individual schools expend their allocations.

**March 20, 2008 meeting (LUMCON, Regents)** - Lois Azzarello presented a brief report on Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. Committee members spoke with Director, Dr. Nancy Rabalais. Dr. Rabalais voiced concern that SGF to LUMCON was reduced and the agency's budget is inadequate. For example, identifying funding to maintain research equipment is difficult.

Mr. Harrison advised the committee this agency adds tremendous value in this region. Members questioned why schools are not charged for classes. Mr. Lambert asked Dr. Rabalais to submit a list of unmet needs, including items requested but not included in the Executive Budget.

In addition to the Regent's write-up to highlight significant changes, Lois Azzarello prepared several tables for members. One table compared Regents recommended funding with existing budget and actual totals expended since FY 04-05. Historical data related to employee count and salary information was included in each packet. Formula implementation rates before/after FY 07-08 were provided to show how schools below 100% in FY 06-07 increased. One table compared FY 06-07 state dollars per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student in similar schools, per SREB category.

The table showing differences in state funding per FTE raised several questions. Mr. Pearson asked why Louisiana has so many four year universities. Mr. Lambert followed up and asked Dr. Joseph Savoie, Commissioner of Higher Education, if Regents had ever discussed merging schools. Mr. Harrison asked how tuition increases would impact TOPS. Mr. Trahan advised the committee of his bill to phase in tuition increases to cover inflation. Ms. Smith asked a question for Ms. Peterson, how Regents has helped SUNO with their recovery efforts. Mr. Trahan asked about deferred maintenance. Mr. Lambert asked how the new \$10 million for new workforce development would be used. Ms.

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Smith asked if faculty salaries were up to the SREB average.

**March 26, 2008 meeting (LSU System)** - In addition to LSU's write-up to highlight significant changes, Lois Azzarello distributed several handouts in preparation of discussing LSU system and in preparation of discussing the remaining three systems in subsequent meetings. Handouts were a collection of materials requested by members and/or materials staff wanted to share with the committee. The intent was to provide members with information to help them compare schools with other schools in their system and with schools in other systems.

Handouts included: a list of all schools to show the difference in SGF between FY 07-08 and FY 08-09; a list of all schools to show the difference in total means of finance between FY 07-08 and FY 08-09; one table for each school, by means of finance, to show actual expenditure totals since FY 04-05, FY 07-08 existing operating budget and Executive Budget recommendations; a three year history to show changes in employee/FTE counts for each system; information on salaries, housing and car allowances of all system presidents and school chancellors; table to show student headcount since Fall 2004; tables, by both object code and functional area, to show how schools budget their dollars; and one table to compare general performance indicators for individual schools, such as state funding per FTE student, retention rate, graduation rate, average ACT and number of TOPS recipients.

LSU handouts also included a history of revenue to Pennington Biomedical Research Center, starting in FY 88-89.

Dr. John Lombardi, President of the LSU System, addressed the committee. Dr. Lombardi advised that quality faculty, quality students and competitive grants and publications will make LSU A&M a more prestigious institution. He is in favor of tougher admission standards and plans to present a resolution to rethink the higher education funding formula. LSU is rethinking the whole fee structure and will ask the legislature to approve a tuition increase.

Mr. Lambert asked if there were any accreditation issues pending. Meeting standards in the large animal area is currently a concern for LSU Veterinary School. Mr. Lambert asked Dr. William Jenkins, Acting Chancellor of LSU A&M, to submit a written request to explain financial needs. The LSU Law Center needs additional funding for a clinic. Mr. Lambert asked Dr. Jack Weiss, Chancellor of the Hebert Law Center, to submit that request. Mr. Harrison asked about the controversy related to an office renovation. Ms. Smith asked if LSU had any plans to reopen the South Baton Rouge clinic.



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Mr. Trahan asked Dr. Lombardi to explain full file review. Ms. Peterson asked about diversity of LSU faculty and staff. Mr. Lambert asked about deferred maintenance. Mr. Harrison asked about transferring of credit hours between schools. Mr. Smith asked if faculty salaries were up to the SREB average. Mr. Harrison asked about additional funding to Pennington. Mr. Trahan asked about the Pelican Promise.

**April 1, 2008 meeting (LCTCS)** - In addition to the write-up and handouts described above, Lois Azzarello provided members additional information unique to the LCTCS system: a table to show LTC allocations to 40 technical schools; a table to give revenue history of the Community and Technical College Development Pool; a breakdown of capital outlay projects included in Act 391 of the 2007 Regular Session.

Dr. Joe May, President of the LCTCS, addressed the committee. Dr. May concentrated his presentation on workforce development efforts. Ms. Peterson stated that she would like to see how the LCTCS budget actually ties to workforce efforts. Mr. Harrison agreed there is a dire need for infrastructure improvements in schools. He would like to see more training for barge work. Mr. Fannin said the state must do more to keep graduates in state and to approach students in high schools. Mr. Smiley complimented the River Parish Community College and asked for help to purchase their building instead of leasing it. Ms. Smith asked if staff recruitment was a problem, particularly in new areas.

**April 8, 2008 meeting (Southern University System)** - After Lois Azzarello made her presentation and distributed handouts described above, committee members spoke with Dr. Ralph Slaughter, President of the Southern System. Conversation focused on hurricane recovery efforts. Mr. Jerry Jones, Director of Facility Planning for the Division of Administration, came to the table to address questions related to building assessments and current efforts. Both Mr. Jones and Dr. Slaughter shared frustrations dealing with FEMA.

Mr. Pearson asked if SUNO and UNO could merge, given their close proximity. Dr. Slaughter explained the missions of these two schools are unique. Ms. Peterson expounded on Dr. Slaughter's response. Ms. Smith asked if faculty pay was up to the SREB average. Dr. Slaughter advised schools are still approximately 6% below SREB average. Ms. Smith asked why SUNO had not yet expended \$3 million in federal hurricane recovery funding. Dr. Victor Ukpole, Chancellor at SUNO, explained that grant was restricted to faculty salaries and that recruiting faculty has been difficult. This 27-month grant will revert back to the USDOE, if not expended. Dr. Ukpole advised the committee he intends to expend this \$3 million before the deadline.

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Mr. Lambert asked if any of the schools had endowments. Dr. Slaughter advised that schools have approximately \$6 million in endowments and that efforts are made to encourage alumni to help support schools. Mr. Pearson asked if any of these building renovations were eligible for Design Build. Jerry Jones responded that none of these renovations are eligible for that program.

**April 15, 2008 meeting (UL System)** - After Lois Azzarello made her presentation and distributed handouts described above, Dr. Nick Bruno, Vice President for Business and Finance for the University of Louisiana System, reviewed several handouts distributed by ULS representatives.

Ms. Peterson asked how higher education data collection fits in with DOA's new statewide IT system. Dr. Bruno explained IT requirements for higher education are complex. Ms. Peterson appreciates the complexity of data collection for student profiles, course and grades, and financial aid, but she still wants data collected to be transferrable and meshed with statewide system.

Ms. Peterson and Ms. Smith expressed interest in ULS efforts to help students hurdle barrier courses that impede student success, particularly in mathematics. All members expressed interest in hearing ULS comprehensive approach to higher education. For example, Dr. Stephen Hulbert, President of Nicholls State University, described Nicholls' relationship with the local school system as a partnership viewing education as a continuum starting with preschoolers. Ms. Smith asked if there is a real or assumed difference between public school graduate mathematics readiness and nonpublic school graduate mathematics readiness.

Mr. Trahan asked questions related to campus security. Dr. Randy Moffett, President of Southeastern University, assured Mr. Trahan that schools have emergency policies and operating agreements with local law enforcement. Mr. Trahan advised all that he is interested in a new methodology for higher education funding, a methodology that would use both enrollment and performance. For example, he'd like to see 80% calculated using FTE and see 20% allowed for performance incentives.

Ms. Peterson initiated a lengthy discussion on workforce development. The committee asked about collaborative efforts among state agencies (ie.. Department of Labor, LDE, and LCTCS). Ms. Peterson wants to recognize the link between four year school graduates and workforce development, just like the committee has heard the link between two year schools and workforce development. Mr. Harrison questioned why the Administration has not attended these subcommittees and voiced concern that four year schools may not be in the workforce development loop as much as they should be in collaborative discussions. Ms. Peterson asked why the Department of Labor is not on all college campuses recruiting graduates.

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### **SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The goal of the subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee, the full committee and the entire House, is to first act as good stewards of state taxpayer dollars by ensuring the most cost-efficient delivery of state services possible, while, at the same time, recognizing that "one-time" dollars should not be spent on recurring expenses.

In conclusion, after review of the abovementioned agency budgets, we, the members of the Education Subcommittee recommend the following adjustments to the FY 08-09 budgets.

Department	Minimum Adjustment
<u>Special Schools and Commissions</u>	<u>(\$270,145)</u>
<u>Department of Education</u>	<u>(\$38,483,081)</u>
<u>Higher Education</u>	<u>(\$31,057,477)</u>

The minimum adjustment may be revised by the full Appropriations Committee. The amount of the revision will be determined at such time as the Revenue Estimating Conference meets and recognizes additional revenue for FY 08-09.

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#### **ADDENDUM**

##### **FINAL ACTION OF APPROPRIATION SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Representatives Peterson, Smith and Trahan noted a concern for including the LA4 \$2.5 million enhancement in the minimum adjustment.

Chairman Lambert recommended, and the committee approved, the adoption of the minimum adjustments for Special Schools and Commissions, the Department of Education and Higher Education.

Representative Smith's motion to include \$10 million Statutory Dedicated funding for the Recovery School District (for the School Choice Initiative and the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program proposed in House Bill No. 1347) in the minimum adjustments failed.

Representative Peterson recommended, and the committee approved, \$8.5 million for extended instruction for the Recovery School District.

Representative Pearson recommended, and the committee approved, a review of the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts policy for admission of students as sophomores in a period of declining student enrollments at the institution and whether that should be considered for cuts.

Representative Harrison recommended, and the committee approved, that the final report include restoring funding of \$1.5 million for school social worker salary supplements and provide \$2.3 million for speech language pathologists and audiologists salary supplements.

Representative Smith recommended, and the committee approved, that the final report include \$3.1 million for the one-time salary supplement for public school paraprofessionals.

Representative Smith recommended, and the committee approved, that the final report include funding for the LA4 enhancement of \$2.5 million.

Representative Harrison recommended, and the committee approved, that the final report include the need for more discussion of the scholarship program proposed by the administration.

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Representative Peterson moved to reconsider the vote on Representative Smith's earlier motion which failed pertaining to the \$10 million Statutory Dedicated funding for the Recovery School District. Representative Peterson's motion carried and Representative Peterson recommended, and the committee approved, that the final report include eliminating \$10 million in Statutory Dedicated funding for the scholarship program.